
CHAPTER 7: THE AUTOMOBILE

EXISTING CONDITIONS	69
GOALS AND SOLUTIONS	70

EXISTING CONDITIONS

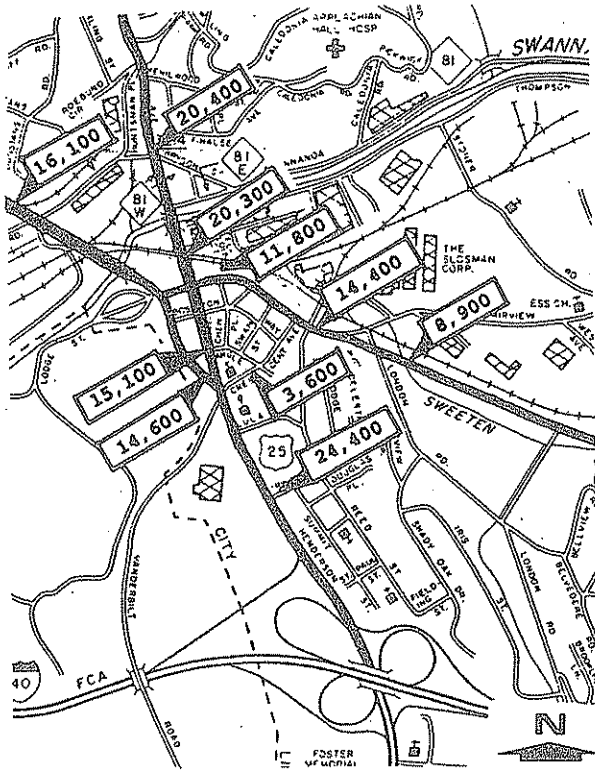
Although the Village was established at a transportation crossroad, the advent and increased use of the automobile over the last fifty years has created a damaging and unmanageable environment for this planned community as originally designed by Olmsted.

Existing conditions and proposed state highway improvements will further discourage destination traffic to local retailers and diminish the pedestrian environment of the original plan:

1. Increased vehicular traffic has caused deterioration of roadbeds. Inappropriate public improvements including curb and gutter have created parking problems on both public and private property. Increased auto-oriented development pressure along significant arteries has encouraged the displacement of those services catering to pedestrian retail establishments.
2. The convergence of Highway 25, Highway 25A and Biltmore Avenue has created severe traffic congestion, particularly at peak hours. This congestion has reduced ease of ingress and egress to the Village retail establishments and has seriously compromised the pedestrian nature of the community.
3. Department of Transportation's Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts in the Biltmore area strongly influenced the new prioritization of the 1991 Transportation Improvement Plan. State and local transportation planners feel that traffic conditions in the Village are the heaviest in the City of Asheville.

In an effort to mitigate through and destination traffic, the 1991 Transportation Improvement Program has made the following recommendations to improve the surrounding transportation facilities:

- a. Accelerated Project - Priority #1: Construct an interchange at US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road) and Interstate 40;
- b. New Projects - Priority #1: Widen US 25A from Fairview Road to Interstate 40 to four (4) lanes;



Average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts in Biltmore Village

1990 AADT Analysis for the Biltmore Village

Roads in/or affecting Biltmore Village

McDowell Viaduct	16,100
Biltmore Ave. south of railroad crossing	20,300
Sweeten Creek at Fairview Road	14,400
Hendersonville Road at Irwin Street	24,400
All Souls Crescent at Hendersonville Rd	14,600
Hendersonville Road at Angle Street	15,100

Comparable Intersections

Tunnel Road at US 70 east	20,800
Tunnel Road at the Asheville Mall	9,000
East entrance to Beaucatcher Tunnel	13,400
Merrimon at Broad Street	10,000
Biltmore Ave south of S Charlotte Street	13,300
Charlotte north of College Street	19,000

Comparative AADT data for Biltmore Village and the City of Asheville

- c. New Projects - Priority #1: Widen McDowell (US 25) from Victoria Road Tunnel to Viaduct to a five (5) lane facility;
 - d. Replace the historic McDowell Street bridge over the Southern Railway lines and the Swannanoa River;
 - e. Replace the bridge over Sweeten Creek Road on Garfield Street.
4. In addition to the through traffic along State arteries, destination traffic to Biltmore Estate® contributes approximately six hundred thousand (600,000) vehicles annually to the State and local road network in the Village. The increase in light manufacturing facilities along Sweeten Creek Road has dramatically increased truck traffic, whose destination is Interstate Highway 40 or Biltmore Avenue north into the City.

The presence of the Southern Railway crossing adds to the gridlock as approximately twenty trains cross Biltmore Avenue throughout the day.

5. Due to years of neglect and improper pavement treatment, an increase in heavy commercial and truck traffic, and periodic flooding, the Village roads are in a serious state of decay. The 1990 Paver Study distress analysis ratings for the City-maintained streets show significant deteriorated conditions in the Village. Working jointly with City Public Works and public and private utilities, the City should develop a phased program to address infrastructure and road improvements.

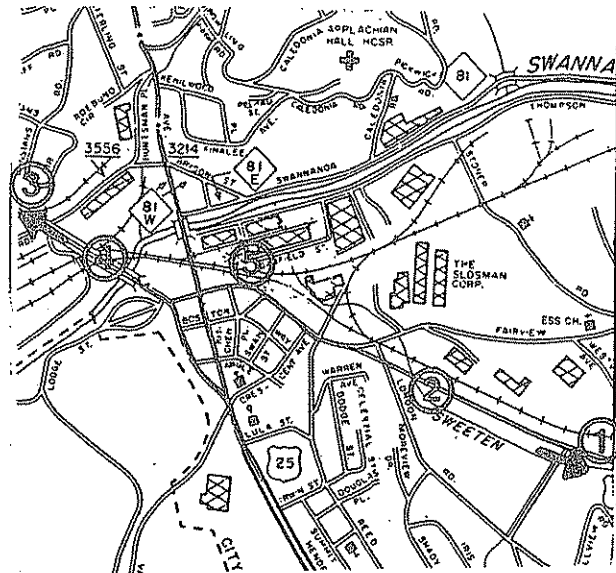
GOALS AND SOLUTIONS

The automobile has a dual effect in Biltmore Village. On one hand it is an efficient mode of transportation, however its presence threatens to destroy the unique village characteristics. Furthermore, the bottleneck design of streets and highways feeding into the Village does not make the area conducive to through traffic.

At present, public and private parking is haphazard in its design. Employees and shoppers compete for limited on-street parking. Off-street parking is unidentified and poorly maintained. Consolidating and reorganizing available facilities should take priority.



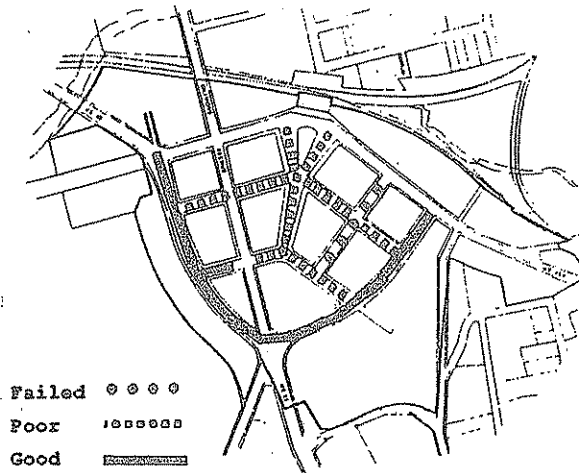
The convergence of State and local traffic arteries are in conflict with the pedestrian orientation of Biltmore Village



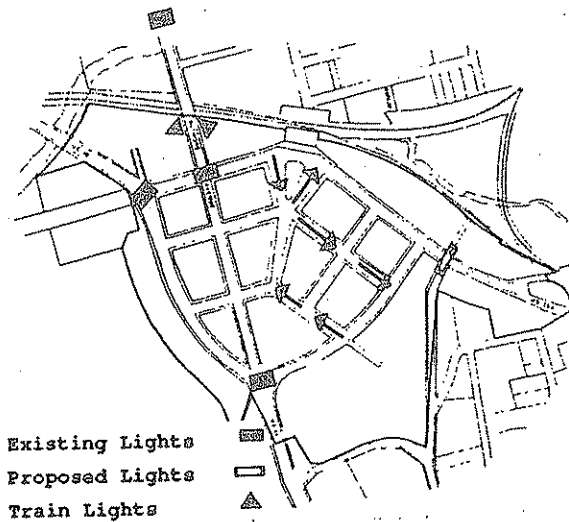
Recommended 1991 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects impacting Biltmore Village



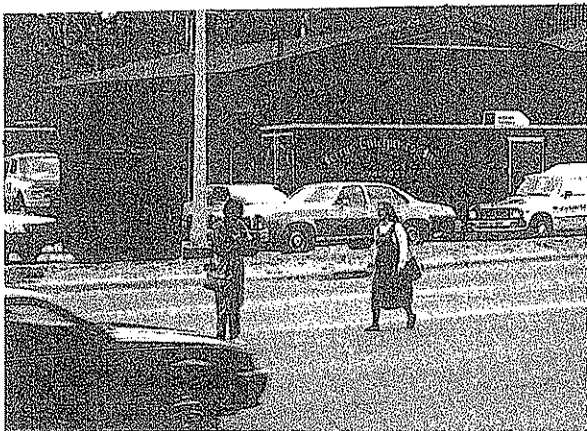
Traffic conditions, poor drainage and years of neglect have caused significant decay of roads



1990 Public Works Paver Study data. Over sixty percent of locally maintained roads are in poor or serious condition



Proposed traffic flow patterns and traffic signals



The lack of pedestrian right-of-ways and crosswalks creates a safety hazard and inhibits visitors from experiencing all of the Village's historic and retail opportunities

Parking lots should be buffered from the pedestrian in the following ways: parking should be located behind or inside structures; parking lots should be screened with garden walls; with landscaping; and alternative methods of delivering the pedestrian to the village should be developed.

Other forms of relief could include the development of municipal multi-level parking in the high density commercial zone and the promotion of parking facilities in the Historic Cottage and institutional areas. By identifying employee parking areas and by providing for two hour limit for on-street parking, the impact of the automobile can be reduced.

DEVELOP SPECIFIC GOALS

GOAL 1:

Redirect traffic flow along Village side streets to facilitate access to retail shops and adequately address on-street parking.

SOLUTIONS:

- Alter existing side street traffic pattern.
- Redirect one-way traffic on Boston Way between Kitchin Place and All Souls Crescent.
- Redirect one-way traffic on Angle Street between Kitchin Place and All Souls Crescent.

GOAL 2:

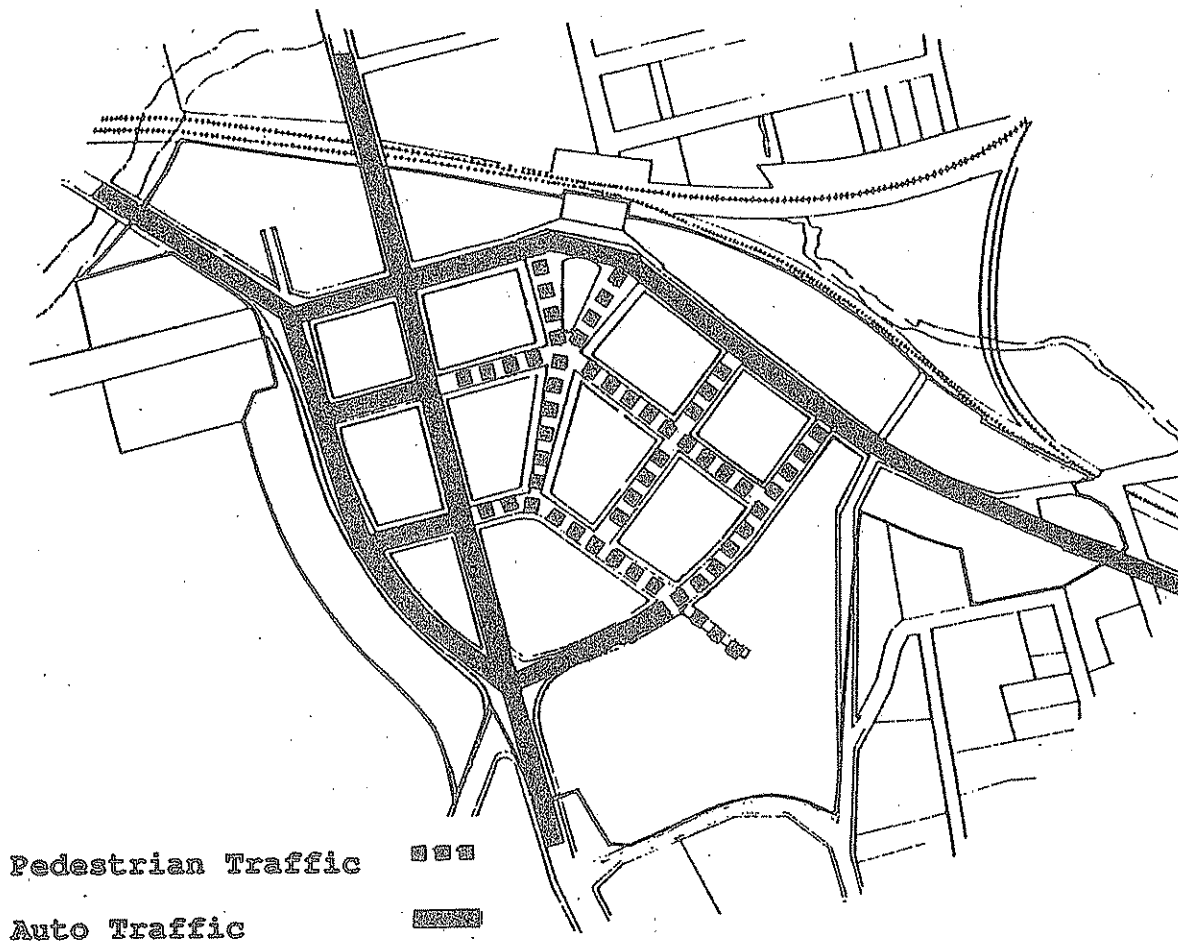
Facilitate commuter traffic along Hendersonville Road and All Souls Crescent.

SOLUTIONS:

- Investigate with State and local transportation planners the benefits of three versus four lane avenues on All Souls Crescent between Hendersonville Road and the Viaduct and along Hendersonville Road to the railroad crossing. A middle turn lane may facilitate destination traffic within the Village.
- Synchronize traffic lights to facilitate through commuter traffic along US25, All Souls Crescent and Lodge Street.
- Provide traffic light at Lula St. Bypass and Brook Street. This may also provide directional information due to train traffic on Biltmore Avenue.

GOAL 3:

Redirect through traffic around the Village where possible and mitigate impact of State road widening projects on historic resources, particularly on Lodge and Brook Streets.



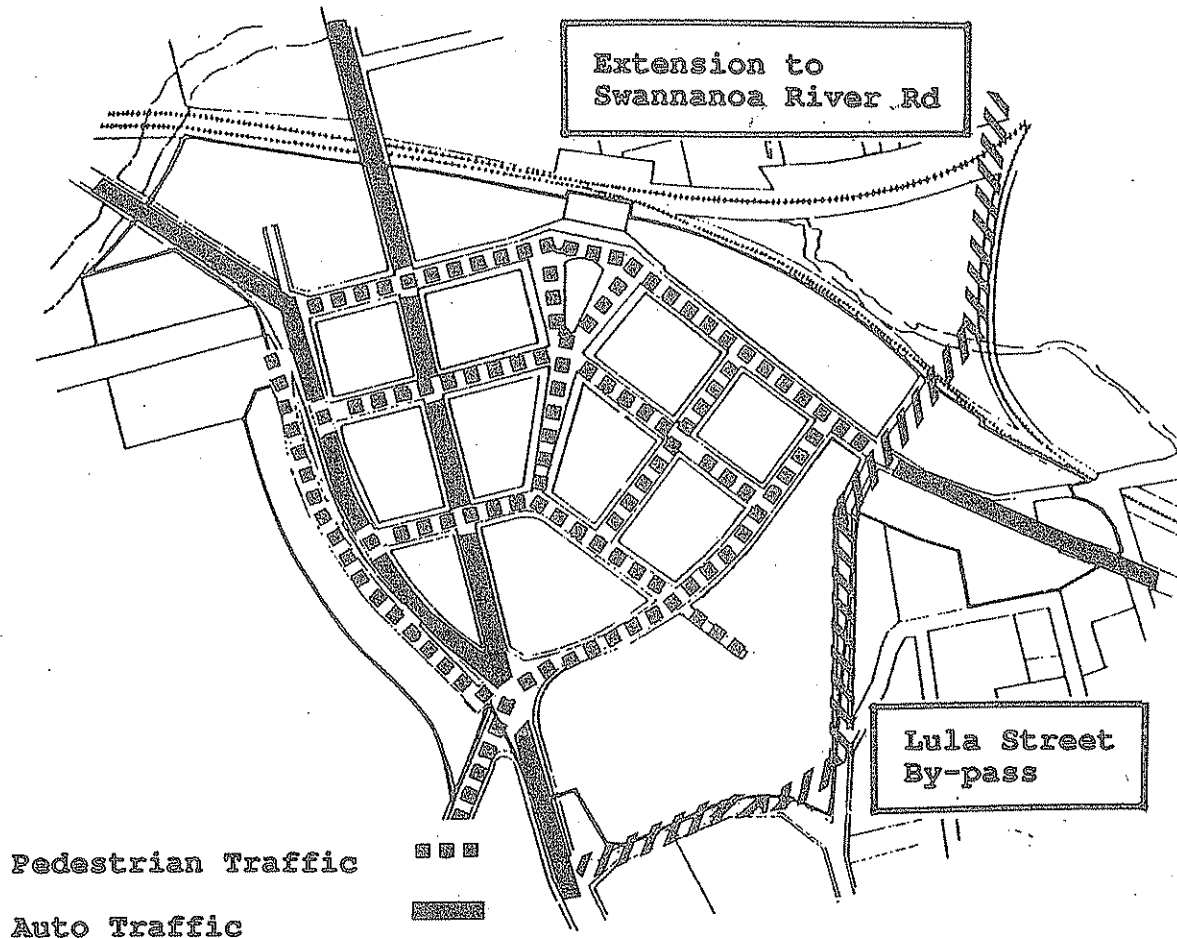
Existing road usage and pedestrian orientation:

Implications

- Retailers along western portion of the Village are isolated from the pedestrian;
- Lack of crosswalks and pedestrian facilities inhibit the crossing of Hendersonville Road and All Souls Crescent;
- The lack of crosswalks and traffic lights on Brook Street and Sweeten Creek Road has discouraged the development of pedestrian oriented establishments on the north side of the road;
- The convergence of two State highways at Biltmore Avenue creates constant bottlenecks for commuter traffic.

SOLUTIONS:

- Widen Lula Street to four (4) lanes to provide a "by-pass" for truck and commuter traffic between I-40 and Sweeten Creek Road.
- Construct "Lula Street Extension" to connect by-pass with Swannanoa River Road. This will provide a commuter through traffic access to Asheville downtown.



Proposed pedestrian access and commuter traffic:

Resolutions:

- *The construction of the Lula Street Bypass and extension to Swannanoa River Road will alleviate commuter traffic along Lodge and Brook Streets;*
- *Installation of crosswalks and pedestrian facilities will enhance retailing throughout the Village;*
- *Recapturing sidewalk right-of-ways from private owners will benefit the entire Village.*
- *Create a special conservation district along new Lula Street bypass in order to assure compatible development.*

GOAL 4:

Discourage through traffic along pedestrian oriented streets.

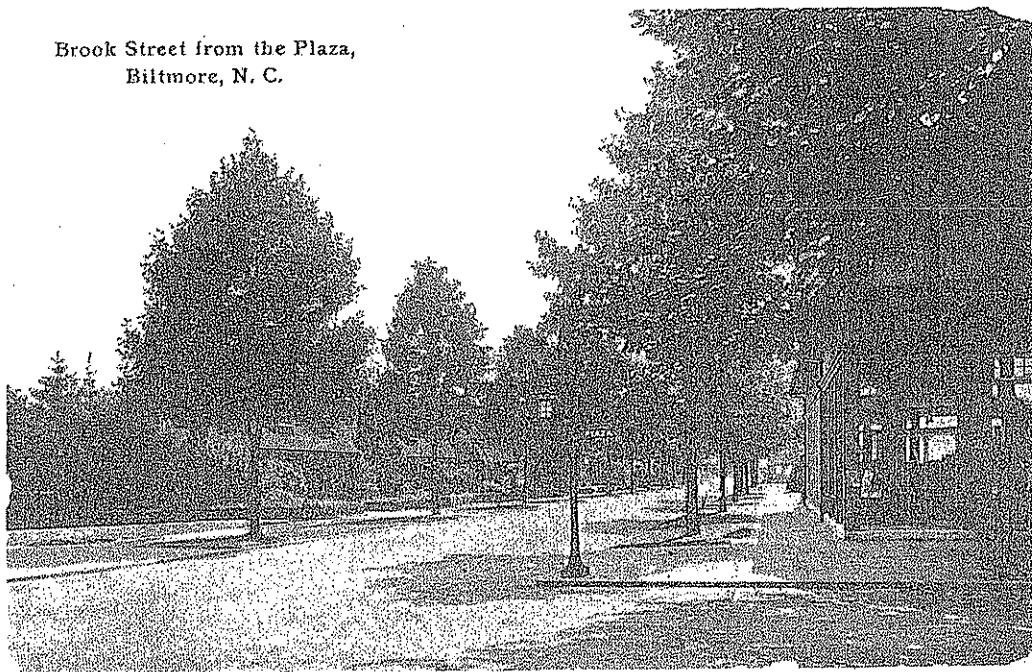
SOLUTIONS:

- Provide visual alternatives to redirect traffic (identification signage, road paving material, landscaping, etc.).
- Redesign Sweeten Creek Road and Lula Street intersection to direct through traffic to Swannanoa River Road and Hendersonville Road.
- Return Brook Street right-of-way to its original width and condition.
- Re-introduce pedestrian amenities along Brook Street between Lula Street and Kitchin Place.



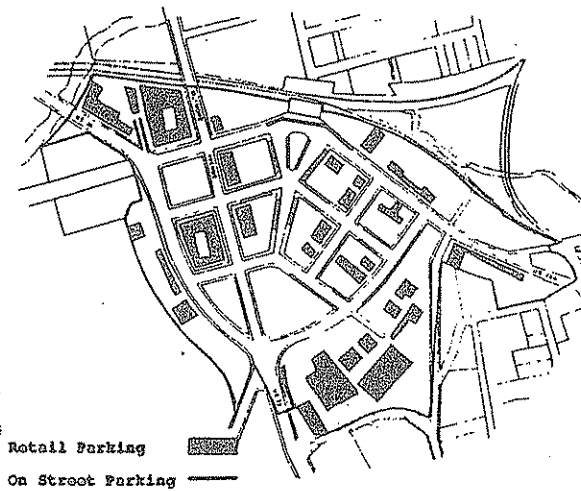
Brook Street looking west, 1990.

Brook Street from the Plaza,
Biltmore, N. C.



Brook Street looking south-east, 1905

Proposed changes include the development of the Lula Street bypass, the recapturing of the original right-of-way along Brook Street and the implementation of pedestrian amenities.



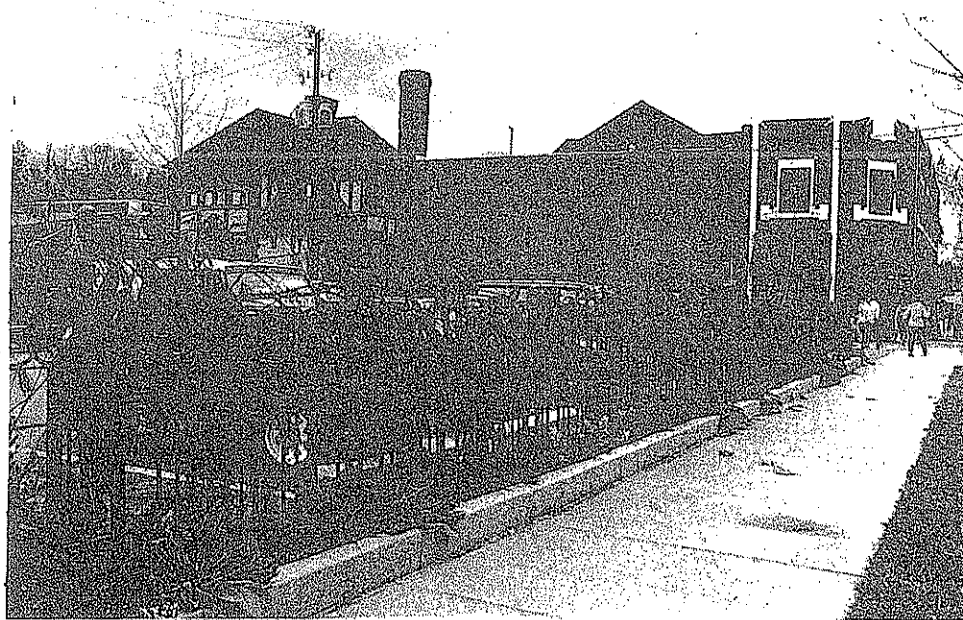
Existing public and private parking. Larger parking facilities are along the highway corridor serving fast food establishments or are for private facilities serving offices and private institutions.

GOAL 5:

Increase on-street and public parking facilities.

SOLUTIONS:

- Designate employee parking areas on the periphery so as to not compete with on-street retail oriented parking.
- Develop street level public parking facilities along the perimeter of the Village, behind storefronts along railroad rights-of-way, and at northeast corner of the Village at the intersection of Sweeten Creek Road and Lula Street.
- Promote joint public/private multi-level parking garages at selective sites throughout the Village:
 - a. Center of the block bordered by Lodge Street, All Souls Crescent, Boston Way and Hendersonville Road;
 - b. Center of the block between Boston Way, All Souls Crescent, Angle Street and Hendersonville Road.
- Regain pedestrian attitude along Brook Street between Lula Street and Kitchin Place and allow for on-street parking.



New Morning Gallery parking

Transitional parking should provide appropriate screening.

GOAL 6:

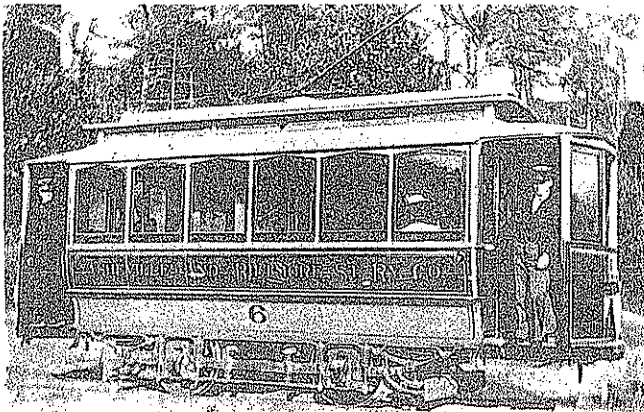
Increase off-street surface parking for employee parking and public retailing, and enhance public transit.

SOLUTIONS:

- Consolidate parking in the rear of properties to provide for shared access and common use for employee and retail customers.
- Construct multi-level parking for large business and commercial establishments.
- Construct multi-level parking facility for the Institutional Area.
- Construct multi-level parking facility in center of the block bounded by Lodge Street, All Souls Crescent, Boston Way and Hendersonville Road.
- Develop a car-pooling program for employees to reduce parking requirements for both on-street and off-street facilities.
- Add a vehicular "trolley" to the City's fleet of buses for Biltmore Village.



Existing parking is inadequate, forcing shoppers to park illegally.



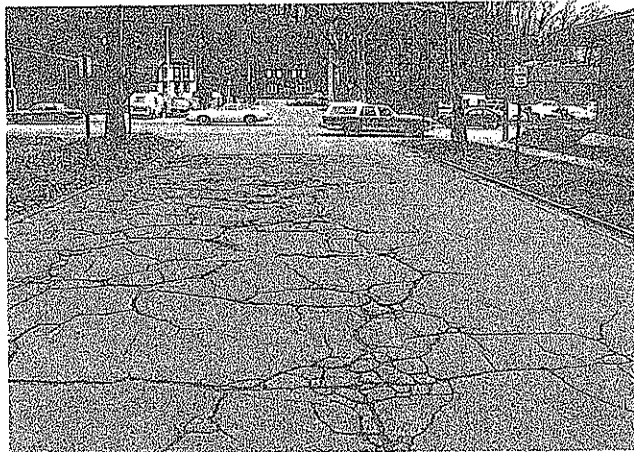
Car No. 6 made numerous trips daily in the early 1900's between Pack Square and Biltmore Village.

GOAL 7:

Repair and upgrade local streets in the Biltmore Village so that they do not negatively impact the historic improvements.

SOLUTIONS:

- Work with City Public Works planners to develop a phased improvement program for local streets in the Village.
- To facilitate other public and private projects in the Village, subterranean utilities and public facilities should be upgraded prior to final paving of the streets.
- Provide underground conduit for electric utilities and conduit for public lighting along right-of-way.
- Prepare water main, sewerage and storm drain collectors for feeders.
- Investigate and propose cost alternatives to paving materials such as crushed brick, embossed asphalt, and unit pavers for example, prior to paving in the typical fashion.
- Scrape city roads before paving.



The 1990 Public Works Paver Study classifies this road as 'poor'.